

## **ACADEMIC STANDARDS COUNCIL**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

May 6, 2014

Video Conference between:

Department of Education  
9890 South Maryland Pkwy  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89183  
Board Room

Department of Education  
700 East Fifth Street  
Carson City, Nevada 89701  
Board Room

#### **COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Amy Carvalho, Chair  
Evelyn Allred  
Sharon Beatty  
Senator Aaron Ford  
Steve Laden  
Gary Shen, M.D.

#### **COUNCIL MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

Assemblyman David Bobzien

#### **DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT:**

Steve Canavero, Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement  
Cynthia Sharp, Director, Assessment, Program Accountability and Curriculum (APAC)  
Dave Brancamp, Assistant Director, APAC  
Andre DeLeon, EPP, K-12 Health, Science, and World Language, APAC  
Darrin Hardman, EPP, APAC  
Laurie Thake, Administrative Assistant

#### **LEGAL COUNSEL:**

Carrie Parker, Deputy Attorney General

#### **AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:**

*Carson City:*

Rommy Cronin, DCSD  
Sarah Lobsinger, Carson City SD  
Vicki Collaro, WCSD  
Marissa McCush, NWRPDP  
Becky Curtright, WCSD  
Tracy Gruber, NDE

*Las Vegas:*

Ben Gerhardt, Nevada Virtual Academy  
Orlando Dos Santos, Nevada Virtual Academy

Karl Spendlove, SNRPDP  
Sara Arizmendez, CPD CCSD  
Wendy Weatherwax, CPD CCSD  
Eric Johnson, CPD CCSD  
Nicole Klimow, CPD CCSD  
Diane Reitz

### **Call to Order; Roll Call; Pledge of Allegiance.**

Chair Carvalho called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m., with the attendance reflected above. It was determined a quorum was present.

Chair Carvalho led the pledge of allegiance.

### **Public Comment #1.**

#### *Carson City:*

Rommy Cronin from the Douglas County School District provided comment on agenda item #6 relative to the prioritization of standards for the End of Course examinations. Douglas County supports the prioritization, but would like some flexibility based upon their integrated approach to mathematics.

Marissa McCush from the NWRPDP stated they fully supported the standards, but commented that the prioritized standards were not all the teachers taught in the classroom. These standards are cohesive and focused for student advancement.

Becky Curtright from the Washoe County School District stated they supported the standards as prioritized. It is their belief that semester testing would be the best option.

#### *Las Vegas:*

No public comment.

### **Introduction of Council Members.**

Chair Carvalho introduced new council member Gary Shen, M.D.

### **Approval of the Academic Standards Council Meeting Minutes from August 23, 2013.**

**MOTION:** Member Beatty moved to approve the minutes from the August 23, 2013 Academic Standards Council meeting as written. Member Ford seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Overview of the End of Course examinations and role of the Council.**

Deputy Superintendent Canavero provided an overview of the Council's role in the End of Course Examinations (EOC). The State Board of Education (SBE) continues to discuss these exams and has noted a significant challenge occurs when accelerating the implementation timeline of the EOC examinations. In addition to logistical challenges, we need to develop EOCs which are fair and reliable. NDE staff has been working through a number of these issues and have drafted proposed regulatory language to the

Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) and we are working through the details. We want to develop the finest EOC system we can in the near-term without sacrificing long-term assessment goals.

When staff worked with the SBE on the EOCs, it was decided to use generic terms for the two EOCs in mathematics and the two EOCs in English Language Arts (ELA). We are using generic terms because different districts label classes in different ways. This Council is empowered to assign priorities, establish emphasis, and revise the standards if necessary. It is important to reiterate for the record that we acknowledge that these are not the only standards taught, but these are the standards we believe we can assess fairly to accurately measure what students should know and be able to do in these courses.

The NDE and the SBE have agreed that, in delivering the EOCs in an ideal world, we would allow a semester based testing option as well. As we get the foundational pieces done, we can look at the readiness for a semester based EOC option.

There is a nuance with the math standards we will discuss later, but it is also relevant in the overview. When the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) in high school mathematics were reviewed, this Council and the SBE had originally implemented a phased in approach for those standards. Unfortunately, that phased in approach was not delivered to LCB and was held at the NDE. In the transition in leadership and staff, that was a piece that was not finished. Your decisions for prioritization for mathematics will be pending before the SBE and the Legislative Commission; who will be acting upon the revisions of the regulations to bring the NVACS into high school.

**Overview and prioritization of standards for each End of Course examination. Pursuant to NRS 389.520(1)(c), the Council shall assign priorities to the standards of content and performance relative to importance and degree of emphasis and revise the standards, if necessary, based upon the priorities.**

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards\\_Commissions\\_Councils/Council\\_to\\_Establish\\_Academic\\_Standards/Agendas/2014/Agenda\\_Item\\_6\\_\(1\)\\_-End\\_of\\_Course\\_Prioritization\\_Process/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/Council_to_Establish_Academic_Standards/Agendas/2014/Agenda_Item_6_(1)_-End_of_Course_Prioritization_Process/)

Cindy Sharp, Director of APAC, and Dave Brancamp, Assistant Director, APAC lead the presentation on the prioritization process. There are a large number of standards in the new content standards, so prioritization was necessary. Our primary goal was to make sure EOCs are aligned with the new standards. Superintendent Erquiaga invited stakeholders representing education professionals from the entire state to decide the major work areas where teachers would spend most of their time.

Members discussed the composition of the stakeholder group with the presenters. It was noted there were eight stakeholders in the mathematics group and 8 stakeholders in the ELA group, and while not all were currently teachers, all stakeholders had a teaching background. SBE Member Mark Newburn participated with both the mathematics and ELA stakeholders and was instrumental in offering feedback to the SBE. The RPDPs would be recruited to share information and receive feedback from business members in their communities.

Members questioned the presenters on how to ensure those students who need a richer exposure to the standards get the support they need. Director Sharp stated a lot of that support would come from the use of progressions, or enablers. The new set of standards emphasizes the integration of components. Teachers cannot focus on just one year of standards; they need to make sure progression is happening. Assistant Director Brancamp added the committee subdivided standards into 4 areas:

fundamental work, important work, supporting work, and major work. These efforts make a strong effort to ensure fundamental work is in place.

Member Beatty noted it was very difficult to evaluate students who did not have the concepts built early, starting in kindergarten. If testing is too harsh or too early it could create problems for our students. Director Sharp responded that we have had new content standards in Nevada since 2010. The concern you address always occurs, but I believe we have an easier transition now since we will be designing materials that outline what teaches need to be teaching now to transition to the new assessments. Deputy Canavero stated that Member Beatty's question strikes at the heart of the transition. The SBE directed NDE staff to write assessments for the first 2 cohort classes. Then they would have the opportunity to go to course grade if they didn't pass the test. This would apply for the 2017-18 school year as well. That is the spirit of what the SBE intended and we are working with the LCB on language to implement that.

Members and the presenters discussed how the new EOCs would correlate with SBAC, and how the science standards complement and work with mathematics and ELA. Assistant Director Brancamp indicated the new EOCs were intended to mirror SBAC style questions as much as possible, and to also make sure standards align with the 11<sup>th</sup> grade college and career readiness test. Director Sharp added that if you look at the new ELA standards, there is a whole section on literacy. The intent was to marry literacy across all of the content standards. Science standards have a literacy component as well. Literacy will be the umbrella which ties all the standards together. There will be an EOC in science in the 2017-18 school year as well. Our goal is for our students will be able to read, write, listen, and speak about the content they are studying.

#### **Math I – will focus on Algebra I (Pending final adoption by the State Board of Education).**

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards\\_Commissions\\_Councils/Council\\_to\\_Establish\\_Academic\\_Standards/Agendas/2014/Agenda\\_Item\\_6\\_\(2a\)\\_-Math\\_I/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/Council_to_Establish_Academic_Standards/Agendas/2014/Agenda_Item_6_(2a)_-Math_I/)

Assistant Director Brancamp presented an overview of the above-referenced attachment. Each has a primary standard, a secondary standard, and then a summary of what each section would basically cover. Some standards have a star at the end, and that star represents a model which demonstrates the standard; a way to see it done rather than just a computational item. Each page also has a content cluster. These items are necessary to get students ready for Math II and career readiness.

Members discussed the emphasis on algebra and geometry and queried as to whether other states had a similar focus on EOCs. Assistant Director Brancamp indicated that in states which have EOCs, the primary areas of focus are algebra and geometry.

Member Beatty asked if the process itself would be evaluated. Will these exams be more than multiple choice and include a creative effort to address the questions in this exam? Director Sharp stated it is our intent to mirror the SBAC assessment style from grades 3-8 as much as possible. With the proposed online assessments, there are options for computer enhancements and there will be a requirement for students to demonstrate their knowledge.

Member Laden stated, after reviewing the standards for Math I, there may be students who will be ready to take this exam at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Will that exam be available to them or will they have to wait until high school? Assistant Director Brancamp stated if the student covers the topics in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, then that is when they would be assessed. Member Laden questioned if they do not pass the

exam in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, how does that effect their high school graduation requirement? Assistant Director Brancamp indicated those students who took Math I classes in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, but did not pass the EOC would have additional opportunities to pass the exam in high school.

**MOTION:** Member Allred moved to accept the prioritized Math I standards as presented pending final adoption of the State Board of Education. Member Laden seconded. The motion carried.

#### **Math II – will focus on Geometry (Pending final adoption by the State Board of Education).**

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards\\_Commissions\\_Councils/Council\\_to\\_Establish\\_Academic\\_Standards/Agendas/2014/Agenda\\_Item\\_6\\_\(2b\)\\_-Math\\_II/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/Council_to_Establish_Academic_Standards/Agendas/2014/Agenda_Item_6_(2b)_-Math_II/)

Assistant Director Brancamp indicated the main difference on the Math II graph is the absence of secondary skills. Instead, statements such as “prove” or “apply” are used. Students will have to look at the information provided and demonstrate as a graph statement. There are further statistical pieces that will apply as well, which will connect back and build upon what the student learned in Math I. We want to make sure are students are prepared for the college and career readiness test.

**MOTION:** Member Shen moved to accept the prioritized Math II standards as presented pending final adoption of the State Board of Education. Member Ford seconded. The motion carried.

#### **English Language Arts I – Focus is on reading comprehension.**

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards\\_Commissions\\_Councils/Council\\_to\\_Establish\\_Academic\\_Standards/Agendas/2014/Agenda\\_Item\\_6\\_\(2c\)\\_-ELA\\_I\\_-\\_Reading/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/Council_to_Establish_Academic_Standards/Agendas/2014/Agenda_Item_6_(2c)_-ELA_I_-_Reading/)

Director Sharp stated the focus of ELA I was on reading comprehension in the areas of literature and informational text. The emphasis in the content standards is on close reading. Members understood the progression in literary analysis, but questioned whether issues like explicit and implicit analysis, and discussing the author’s choices were appropriate for the average student. Darrin Hardman, APAC, indicated the standards were more aggressive than those seen in the past and were put forward to achieve the goal of college and career readiness. This task is daunting. It will be challenging and it will be difficult; however, if students are receiving proper instruction they should be able to pass the assessment. Director Sharp indicated they were still working on the test design; however, as we field test these areas, we will have a better idea of how we will enhance instruction to catch up in areas where we are weak.

Members questioned the emphasis on informational texts over literary texts. Senator Ford indicated there had been resistance lately to the focus on informational text and requested some insight as to the break down is between the two areas. Director Sharp indicated the split was 70% informational text and 30% literary text. In the complex world we live in, people are reading more for information. Also, students do better on informational text because it is more engaging. We do not want literature to be removed, but we spend most of our time reading informational material. Additionally, both higher education and businesses demand the ability to read analyze informational text.

Members and the NDE presenters discussed whether there were studies which showed a decline in student creativity by the shift to reading more informational text. Mr. Hardman indicated they were not aware of any study which established such a division impedes creativity. They also noted the split would

help engage all teachers in spreading information and engaging students. The opportunity to promote and achieve literacy is spread across the school and does not rest solely with the English teachers.

**MOTION:** Member Allred moved to accept ELA I standards with the focus on reading comprehension as prioritized by the NDE. Member Laden seconded. The motion carried.

### **English Language Arts II – Focus is on writing mastery.**

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards\\_Commissions\\_Councils/Council\\_to\\_Establish\\_Academic\\_Standards/Agendas/2014/Agenda\\_Item\\_6\\_\(2d\)\\_-ELA\\_II\\_-\\_Writing/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/Council_to_Establish_Academic_Standards/Agendas/2014/Agenda_Item_6_(2d)_-ELA_II_-_Writing/)

Director Sharp indicated the two ELA assessments would eventually merge into one comprehensive ELA assessment in grade 10, or at the completion of the course work, which would include both reading and writing. Science will be eventually become the 4<sup>th</sup> EOC assessment.

Deputy Superintendent Canavero stated that once the standards are prioritized, we will communicate with the school districts and the districts will provide the NDE with a list of courses aligned to the standards and an EOC. At the end of the day we will have a course title in every district which will align with an EOC. Then we can define windows for the assessments to be given.

Member Allred questioned whether the career and technical writing portion of the assessment would include resumes and job applications. Director Sharp indicated the need for better technical writing skills is something we have heard from the business community for a while. When we get to the test design, we will have writing tasks. I do not know if the exam will specifically include a resume, but there will be technical writing tasks.

Member Laden identified a need to emphasize the use of grammar conventions in writing. As a business person, we see poor writing skills from those entering the workforce. I would like to see this addressed directly in our standards. Director Sharp indicated if we spell out too much in the standards, we would certainly miss something. A better option would be to expand the rubric in detail. Member Laden stated the end result needs to reflect that if I have a Nevada high school graduate before me and they have passed their EOC, then I can assume they can write a coherent document. Employers need to know that. Mr. Hardman agreed that would be the minimum expectation of a student leaving our system.

Member Beatty questioned the emphasis on narrative writing. If we are going to emphasize non-fiction reading, then we should emphasize non-fiction writing. Mr. Hardman stated that what we know about good writers is that they use various techniques at any point of time, when appropriate, and as needed. Members agreed that both narrative and informational writing were important, and that importance needed to be documented. Director Sharp indicated when we design the test we can design some tasks to place the emphasis on writing to pass on information, and others which are narrative. Writing tasks can also be created to emphasize identification of the audience, formatting, vocabulary, etc.

**MOTION:** Member Allred moved to accept the prioritized standards for ELA II as presented, with a recommendation from this Council that informational writing conventions and grammar play a part in the assessment development of the writing assessments. Member Laden second.

Member Beatty expressed concern that the writing standards were very broad. Mr. Hardman stated that standards build year upon year, and students have had exposure and instruction throughout their

K-12 career. Nicole Klimow, who develops curriculum for CCSD was asked to add a district perspective. Ms. Klimow indicated that the standards have changed a lot and some AP areas are now in the NVACS. We have asked our teacher to spend time in those AP classrooms to find out what they need to do. Our students are learning how to be better writers. We need to have more faith in our students and our teachers. We need to study the structure of text to improve writhing. The best way to improve writing is to follow the examples seen while reading.

**Chair Carvalho called for a vote on the motion. Chair Carvalho, Member Allred, Member Chen, and Member Laden voted in favor. Senator Ford and Member Beatty abstained. The motion carried by a 4 to 2 vote.**

Deputy Attorney General Parker, for the record, requested an explanation as to why the two members were abstaining.

Senator Ford stated he was not ready to vote yet. I have not thought about it enough and I want to make an informed decision, but there is not enough information. I do not want to go on the record as yes or no at this point.

Member Beatty stated I think I understand that these standards are also prioritized in the testing, but it is not clear. Because of that I am a little uncomfortable saying that I agree with these priorities. It sounds like there is going to be a calibration of the priorities in the priority list, but I am not sure how that will look in the end. Based upon my confusion, I am abstaining.

Deputy Attorney General Parker stated the members who voted for the motion could table it until NDE staff could bring back further information, if there is an appetite for that. A unanimous vote is not required. Since we have a quorum, under Robert's Rules of Order, when a motion passes the way to undo it is through a motion to reconsider. It cannot be withdrawn by the motion maker because the body has already voted. If left the way it is, the motion has passed.

Chair Carvalho asked if there was a motion to reconsider. No motion was made.

Member Allred departed the meeting at approximately 3:00 p.m.

### **Update on standard revision and adoption.**

#### **Nevada Physical Education Standards.**

Assistant Director Brancamp stated the Physical Education Standards recently recommended by this Council were now the standards of record. The NDE is working on getting the standards out to the districts for curriculum development and we should see those new PE standards enacted by the 2015-2016 school year.

#### **Nevada Science Standards.**

André DeLeon, Education Programs Professional, APAC, NDE stated that in August 2013 suggested revisions to the Science Standards were brought before this Council. Those standards progressed through the public workshop and public hearing process. Subsequently, the SBE voted unanimously to accept the revised standards, which are now at the Legislative Counsel Bureau. We are now focusing our effort to provide information on and framework to the standards. We are targeting this fall for professional development, with school implementation during fall 2015.

**Nevada World Languages Standards.**

Mr. DeLeon informed the Council that on Jan 23-24, 2014, a committee was brought together to review and discuss the proposed revision of “Foreign Language” to “World Language” and the rationale for that revision, as well as changes to the language of our current standards. The revisions were brought before the Superintendent in a public workshop. The revisions will be brought before the SBE at the upcoming meeting on July 8, 2014.

**Update on the SBAC Field Test for grades 3-8, 9 and 11.**

Director Sharp indicated the SBAC field test was currently in progress and all 23 states are field testing. It is a unique experience for Nevada students because it is the first time our students have been exposed to a computer adapted assessment. There was a great deal of emphasis on accommodations in engaging with the assessment. For the field test, we could have let the contractor randomly select schools or be a state led group. We chose state led so we could have at least one school in each district engage in the field test. For the field test, students are completing either the ELA assessment or the mathematics assessment, but not both. This field test gives us the opportunity to see the new types of test questions, as well as evaluate the technology needs (computer labs, bandwidth issues, etc.) in our districts. To date, we have received only positive comments on the SBAC field test.

**Future meeting and agenda items.**

Senator Ford informed fellow Council members that there had been some vocal members of the public wanting to have the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) repealed, so we may be called on to entertain additional conversation on the CCSS.

Deputy Canavero stated the SBE was empowered to establish examinations in consultation with this Council. In order to fulfill this statutory obligation, at the end of the SBAC field test, this Council and the SBE will engage in proscribing the examinations Nevada. We are waiting for information back from the assessment to review.

**Additional council member comments.**

Member Laden congratulated Amy Carvalho on being appointed Chair of the Council. He also congratulated members of the NDE staff; they do a wonderful job working with stakeholders and sometimes their hard work goes unnoticed. I am thankful for the work provided. I always want to raise the bar for our students, which raises the bar for everyone. We are all tired of seeing Nevada on the bottom of the list. We need to keep raising the bar and to keep challenging our stakeholders. We need to make sure when we put these standards in place we have the resources to make them happen. Time, talent, treasure; we need those things to make these changes happen. We have to challenge all of those around us to commit the resources to back this up.

Senator Ford commented on the reason he abstained from the earlier vote on ELA II. I would like further correspondence on the alignment between the reading and writing standards. Why focus on narrative rather than informative? Further information from staff in the next month or so would be useful. Thank you.

Member Beatty stated there were a lot of standards to deal with and prioritize, and of course I wanted them reprioritized. I recognize and do appreciate your efforts in attempting to bring some clarity to them. I would also like to hear some responses to Senator Ford's questions. Ultimately, I think it is the exam which will cause the most distress for the public.

Member Shen stated it was an honor to join the Council and hoped he could contribute more in the future. Thank you.

Chair Carvalho stated NDE staff had done a tremendous job to bring this forward. As a Clark County graduate and a business owner, I am excited about the prospect of increasing our standards and raising the bar. Thank you to the NDE staff for all of the work you do.

**Public comment #2.**

There was no public comment.

**Meeting adjournment.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:36 p.m.